

BE A ROSE-CROIX!

Imperator Christian Bernard, FRC

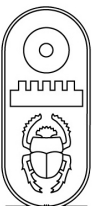


Ralph Maxwell Lewis and Christian Bernard, 1983.

Christian Bernard serves as the Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC worldwide. In this essay from his book So Mote It Be! he invites us to be a Rose-Croix together.

Twenty-one years! This was my age when I received, as a gift from Ralph Maxwell Lewis, the following words: “Be a Rose-Croix!” At the end of his incarnation, on January 12, 1987, this illuminated soul left vacant the office of Imperator of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, a role which he had held for nearly fifty years. Between the time he solemnly spoke these words to me in the Supreme Temple in San Jose, California, and his transition, fifteen years had elapsed, and during that time not a single day passed that his words did not impress themselves upon my mind. It is the same today, and these very words still echoed deep within my heart when I, myself, was installed in the office of Imperator in April 1990.

He did not say: “Be a Rosicrucian!” or “Serve the RoseCroix!” He told me: “Be a Rose-Croix!” A commanding, profound look then accompanied his voice, and his words penetrated into the depths of my soul. I should have received this injunction with great joy, indeed have considered it an honor, but instead an indescribable feeling of anguish and sorrow gripped me. At the time, I found it difficult to analyze my reaction, but later on I understood that my inner self had realized the magnitude of such an order and the difficulty in obeying it. I have not achieved the Rose-Croix state, but I have done my best to keep the torch of our Order burning and, in doing so, I have had to face many ordeals. Difficult challenges have placed obstacles in my path. The forces have been awesome and still are, but when my courage wavers, I find renewed hope by placing myself under the protection of the Rose-Croix, my ideal; and then that profound look



and the voice of Ralph M. Lewis saying to me “Be a Rose-Croix” impose themselves upon me.

When one becomes a member of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, one learns the meaning of Rosicrucianism and of being a Rosicrucian. But to what state does being a Rose-Croix truly correspond? In the Rosicrucian Tradition, the expression “Rose-Croix state” refers to the state of perfection. Can it be achieved? Yes, but when and how? I had the opportunity to ask this question of Ralph M. Lewis himself and he answered: “To be a Rose-Croix is to be a Rosicrucian first.” I have inferred from this answer that in order to attain the Rose-Croix state and become a Master, it is first necessary to study as a disciple, even though this state may last for tens or hundreds of incarnations. Therefore, the word first meant “patience,” but it signified even more. First means “first of all,” and, consequently, “above all” a Rosicrucian. It cannot be otherwise for those who have chosen to follow a traditional and initiatory path such as that offered by the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis.

To be a Rosicrucian means to be on the Path to Enlightenment; to be a Rose-Croix signifies having come to the end of that Path. Our inner self knows and understands this finality. To know and to understand is like being there already. Therefore, “Be a Rose-Croix” also means: “Let us behave as though we have arrived.” It is a very great responsibility and challenge, for as Rosicrucians we may stumble and even fall, make fundamental

errors and yet proceed, as Rose-Croix we cannot do so. To be a Rose-Croix is to be an example. It is also to be a light so powerful that it dispels darkness. The Rose-Croix is initially a Rosicrucian, but whose qualities are exceptionally developed.



Emperor Christian Bernard at the opening of the 2015 AMORC World Convention, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of AMORC.

By definition, the Rose-Croix must possess all virtues, but to me eight of them seem the most essential. They are obedience, confidence, patience, humility, simplicity, tolerance, strength, and love – a virtue that cannot be dissociated from other virtues and from all existing virtues. The Rose-Croix is therefore obedient, confident, patient, humble, simple, tolerant, strong, and loving. Other qualities may be added to these, for their number is inexhaustible in

comparison with what must constitute the perfection of human nature.

“Be a Rose-Croix,” I was ordered one day. Alone, I shall not be able to succeed. So I am asking you: “Let us be Rose-Croix!” and let us help one another. If you are already a Rosicrucian, do not look at the distance that remains to be traveled so as to attain this state of perfection, but see instead the distance that you have already traveled. In this way, you will measure the worth and beauty of the Rosicrucian Path, upon which I am happy to walk beside you. If you are not a member of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, perhaps one day you will be? In that case, you will discover how much life takes on its full meaning when we give the Rose its rightful place upon the Cross.

So Mote it Be!